

# F R E E D O M B U L L E T I N

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## THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMISING START.

We asked a Labour M.P. recently: "Well, how's the Labour Government going on?" "Excellent," he exclaimed; "they are doing so well that soon everyone will be saying, 'If this is Labour Government, let's have more of it,' and soon there will not be an Anarchist left in the country!" If that is so, the electors must be very easily satisfied. There is no doubt the Labour Party is a very promising party, but when their promises come to be translated into deeds there is another tale to tell. They promised to resume relations with Russia at once. Now they are insisting on conditions that have put up the backs of the Soviet Government, and nothing is to be done unless the House of Commons ratifies it. The unemployed were to have work found for them and the number of unemployed rises steadily. They were to raise the age for leaving school. It has been put off till All Fools' Day, 1931. Everyone expected that as they denounced "Jix" for his anti-alien prejudices, the Labour Government would be more tolerant. Their first act was to refuse admission to Trotsky. India is to have self-government, but must acknowledge British sovereignty in India; and as for the Egyptians we are to honour our pledge to them of independence, but will keep our troops across the upper reaches of the Nile as a warning that unless they do as we wish we will cut off the water which is the life-blood of their country.

It is true that Jim Thomas has gone on a joy ride to Canada to see if there are any places where he can dump our unemployed; that George Lansbury has declared a wish to compel the unemployed to work on the land—the landlord's land; that Margaret Bondfield has told the clerks at the Labour Exchanges to address John Smith, unemployed, as "Mr. Smith." But these things do not fill empty bellies. In fact, what with Rationalisation and Disarmament, more John Smiths than ever will soon have empty bellies.

But look at the new roads they are going to build! Oh, yes; we know all about those new roads. That is all very well as a means of improving the transport system, but incidentally it will also increase the value of the land tremendously, so that when the Labour Government sets out to nationalise the land, our dear friends the landlords will be able to claim a higher price than they would get to-day.

The Labour Government says it is not a class Government, but is out to serve the interests of all classes. So they are going to increase the super-tax, but first of all see that the rich increase their wealth so that there will be more super-tax. They are going

to improve our educational system so that our industries can compete on better terms with the foreigner. They will help Lord Melchett with his Empire Chemical Trust so that we shall be in a better position to manufacture explosives and poison gas when the next war comes, and they will bring about peace among the nations so that there shall be no more wars. They are to put an end to land monopoly by buying out the landlords, and they are to continue that monopoly by making the State the sole landlord. They will increase the wages of the workers (so they say), but they will not interfere with legitimate profit-taking. It is even hinted that they are going to raise the Prime Minister's salary. All these wonderful things are to be done if they remain in office long enough.

To read the *Daily Herald* one would imagine that the one aim of the members of the Labour Party is to do good to their fellow-creatures, and that the sweets of office and the importance it gives them are as nothing compared with the satisfaction they feel at being able to help others. One would also imagine that all those out of office were satisfied that Ramsay MacDonald made the best choice when someone else got the job they thought themselves well suited for, and that there were no heartburnings of any kind when they were sent off Ramsay's doorstep empty-handed. There is no doubt that the British electors like lots of moral sentiment in their politicians and the Labour Party can give it them in plenty.

But when are the workers going to benefit from a Labour Government? We know "Socialism in our time!" the slogan of the Independent Labour Party, has been put in the wastepaper basket, but at least the workers might expect some tendency towards the abolition of Capitalism and wage-slavery. They will seek in vain. Not one proposal in the whole of the Labour Party's programme will so much as remove one brick in the mighty edifice of exploitation now ruling the lives of the workers. "The inevitability of gradualness," the motto of Sidney Webb, now in the House of Lords, has been adopted as the last word in Labour statesmanship; and however much the "rebels" in the party may gird at broken election pledges, the party machine will grind them to powder if they fail to obey the whip.

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## HISTORY OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL

If ever a broad and deep gulf was made, regrettable in every other way, but propitious to historical records, it was made on August 1st, 1914; and just as after July, 1830, in France, at last the anti-revolutionary ancien régime up to the fall of the Bastille, 1789, became the subject of research as free as the history of ancient Greece and Rome, so by the concourse of many factors the history of Socialism in the widest aspect up to 1914 has, since then, become a free object of study on the basis of immense documentary and traditional information which otherwise would have been kept secret or private for many years to come, or been gradually lost altogether. This may not apply to absolutely everything, but as the most hidden diplomatic, military, financial and other secrets have come to light since then by heaps and shoals—other secrets now replace every one of them, but this is another subject—so Socialist pre-war history is discussed as freely as no one could have expected before. Moreover, it benefits by this invaluable experience, the insight of the life and doings of every notable Socialist in the 1914-1929 period, when every man was intensely put to his test and had to show his mettle. Under these conditions Socialist history ought to unfold and flourish and produce valuable fruits.

It brought forward some fruits, but by no means a rich crop. We must remember that Socialists are class-divided now; some are rich and powerful, and care little to refresh the memories of an often squalid past; others remain poor workers, and every crisis weighs them down further; so to them the present resembles so much the past that they have little use for the finery of historical retracing of evolutions which, whilst progressive, still move so desperately slow. But there is a great exception to this languishing state of things, namely, Russia, where absolutely everything of public and private wealth and accumulations has been for nearly a dozen years now in the hands of a determined section of Socialists. Their world-wide effort, with unlimited means to impress their will upon the Russian and all other peoples, comprises also the most intense cultivation of search into social revolutionary history which the world has ever seen. Irrespective of the underlying tendency—everything leads up to the glorification of Marx in theory and of Lenin and his successors in practice—this branch of their work led to the unearthing of documentary evidence, letters and memoirs, etc., in an unheard-of degree, objective materials, then, for general research; to the formation of the greatest repositories of Socialist literature, etc., and is thus of permanent value as a broad basis for further studies.

I had some glimpses into this paradise by books and issues of some of the large reviews dealing mainly with Socialist history, sent to me by friends and courteous enemies, when dealing with Bakunin, Kropotkin, the International, early Marxism, etc. I also saw in 1927 in a library the photographic reproduction in full of the large minute books of the General Council, as far as preserved; certain books kept among George Howell's papers supplement them. I know also from the first *Bulletin* of the

Moscow Marx-Engels Institute (January, 1926) that at that time they had there already 50,411 photos of manuscripts and letters, etc., concerning these two men; among them 2,842 pieces of J. Ph. Becker's and Hermann Jung's, 194 of F. Lassner's, 624 of F. A. Sorge's (New York Public Library) letters, etc. No doubt they possess the printed "History" by John R. Commons, mentioned by the translators of the present book, the fourth edition of which—no date is given—must have been issued in 1927, as a publication of that year is quoted (p. 382). It would thus have been possible to issue in 1927 in Moscow something which might "be regarded" *not* "as the definitive history of the First International" (words of the translators, p. xi., October, 1927), for definitive books are not written when the materials have just been collected and made accessible, but in any case, a sound documentary basis for much new work.

I am sorry to say that the present book, not by far nor near, comes up to this mark. Initially, this cannot even have been its aspiration, for as the preface to the first edition is dated January, 1918, it is one of the mass of productions compiled in hot haste, some Marxist oil and Leninist vinegar poured over any heap of materials scraped together which were then crammed down the throat of the Russian people, newly conquered by the Bolsheviks. The essential thing was to hit hard on the Anarchists to the left, on the Social Democrats (social collaborationists) to the right, and to tie everything in history to the triumphal car of proletarian, that is, Bolshevik, dictatorship. I do not know to what extent the fourth edition (1927) is enlarged beyond this first one of 1918, but surely there was time and occasion to improve it and rid it of the shortcomings of its first post haste confection. This has not been done efficiently as, for example, the following will show.

The acme of Marx's procedure against Bakunin and the anti-authoritarians was that commission of investigation on the Alliance appointed by the Hague Congress on September 4th, 1872: Cuno, Lucien [a pseudonym], Viehard, Walter [Van Heddeghem, "provocative agent and traitor," Stekloff, p. 273, "police agent," p. 418], and a member of the libertarian minority, the Belgian lawyer, Roch Splingard. All this, generally known, is fully retold in James Guillaume's "L'Internationale," one of Stekloff's principal sources. His book, translated from the *third* edition, says (p. 237): "The committee of enquiry . . . had been elected, and was composed of Marx, Engels, Wroblewski, Dupont, Serrailier, and Swarn ["police agent," p. 418], representing the Marxist faction; and of Guillaume, Schwitzguebel, Zhukoffsky, Alerini, Morago, Marselau and Farga-Pellier for the Bakuninists," who thus, seven to six, would themselves have proposed the expulsion of Bakunin and Guillaume, etc. That this is not a blunder in translation is proved by note 278 ("the Bakuninists, who were joint members of the committee"), and by p. 238. On this page the written protest ("I protest against the written report of the commission of enquiry") of the only minority member, Roch Splingard, is



ignored as such, and is resumed as a speech by "Roch Spingard, who had heard the evidence put before the committee."

How could such a blunder arise? Simply by copying the above thirteen names from the well known printed report, where they are mentioned as "having been heard" by the commission—as accusers, accused, witnesses, experts, or what not! Of course, in the hurry of book fabrication in 1917-18, this absurd blunder was possible, but to see it survive right into the edition of 1927, and then such a production praised by translators who, as their notes show, have an intellectual life of their own, as "the definitive history," this makes one wonder, if one wonders still at anything.

When many Continental publications from 1895 to 1913 had created a fuller understanding of Bakunin from real sources, when Dr. Fritz Brupbacher's "Marx and Bakunin" (1913) had introduced Bakunin to German Socialist readers, when intelligent Social Democrats like E. Bernstein and F. Mehring began to admit publicly that Bakunin had been shamefully insulted by Marx and Engels, then Stekloff published his little German biography, "Michael Bakunin"

(Stuttgart, 1913, p. 128) which I welcomed publicly as the first such publication by a Social Democrat which was not insulting. But in April, 1914, already Stekloff published "The Bakunist International after the Hague Congress, 1872 to 1881" (in German, 64 p.), where he makes up abundantly for the insulting terms missing in the book of the year before. He is glib, in Marxist suasion and Bolshevik sweeping emphasis; he is uncouth, mediocre, and singularly, almost instinctively, blundersome where he formulates hypotheses of his own; and he is coarse in dealing with the finer features of a case and with opponents. He published a large, several-volumed Russian life of Bakunin, of which I have seen only one chapter, but have no curiosity to see the rest, as whatever passes through Stekloff's hands comes out in gross and coarse form, and is work that has to be done over again. So also has this definitive book on the International, which is but another poor "Devil at the Long Bridge"!

M. N.

August 3rd, 1929.

\*History of the First International. By G. M. Stekloff. Translated by Eden and Cesar Paul. London: Martin Lawrence, Limited. [1928.] xi, 163 pp. 12s. 6d.

## EDWARD CARPENTER.

With the death of Edward Carpenter there passes one of the finest spirits of the early days of the Socialist movement. His work was, and, for those who care to read it, still is, a force and an inspiration. We who in our youth were influenced by his message must feel grateful that he never swerved from the goal of high attainment. Once having seen the truth, having realised the shams and ruthless brutalities of the terrible system of profit-making, Edward Carpenter devoted the rest of his life to the destruction of the Moloch called Capitalism. His first step, after turning his back on his life of a University lecturer, was to get as close to Nature as possible. Eventually he built his own cottage in a garden with a stream running at the foot. Here in his little stone house, wearing his soft tweeds, he seemed like a jewel in its proper setting. To this small home of the poet came a constant procession of admirers. Like pilgrims to a shrine, they came from all parts of the world. Those who were fortunate enough to be frequent visitors would meet travellers from the remotest and least expected corners of the globe. Men and women who had heard the "voice singing the song of deliverance" and were impelled to travel far in order to take him by the hand.

Though every one of Carpenter's works is written with one object, the greater understanding and emancipation of mankind, the whole covers a wide field. "Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure," influenced very largely indeed the thought of the nineties, while "England's Ideal" was almost as great an intellectual force. "Love's Coming of Age," that beautiful and delicately written book on the relationship of the sexes, and "The Intermediate Sex," are two aspects of a subject which it took some considerable courage to even admit existed in those late Victorian days. "Angels' Wings," with its frank acceptance of a coming change in art standards and a belief that art would once again become a part of life itself, left its mark on the lover of beauty seeking

a basis for his own standards. But of all Carpenter's work "Towards Democracy" is the most completely satisfying. In this the poet and prophet, the great lover of mankind, has poured himself. It contains all that Edward Carpenter ever was. In its pages "this man rises from his mould of dust, ranges his life and looks upon the sun." There are moments of pure ecstasy, prophetic pictures of the greater freedom coming to mankind, and a yearning pity for its present pain and repression.

In his teaching and in his life Carpenter was always the foe of authority and officialdom. Always, in fact, more Anarchist than Socialist, though he never cared to label himself. Feeling, as so many of us do, that labels restrict, he preferred to keep himself free to help all movements which made for that true liberty for which, in his own words, "the heroes and lovers of all ages have laid down their lives; and nations like tigers have fought, knowing well that life was a mere empty blob without freedom."

It was a dear privilege to know him. One of my most cherished memories is of week-ends, after periods of sordid money-changing, spent in the little house removed just beyond the smoke and grime of Sheffield, with the man who still remains a source of inspiration to think upon. I met many choice spirits there, but none so gracious, so tender, so truly beautiful as our teacher-host.

"Do not hurry; have faith," is one of his choicest messages. This attitude towards life gave him a quiet dignity that created a sense of rest to all who came under his spell.

He ate no animal food nor hurt any of earth's creatures for his clothing. He lived simply and beautifully, writing his books, lecturing on the rare occasions when he allowed himself a spell in towns, and, towards the end, preparing to pass out in calm and happy trance "into that other land where the great Voices sound and Visions dwell."

BESSIE WARD.

## DEATH OF WM. C. OWEN.



"W.C.O.," SEPTEMBER, 1928.

We regret to announce the death of our beloved comrade and friend, William Charles Owen, who died in a nursing home at Worthing on July 9th, aged 75 years.

Owen came from an aristocratic family. His father at the age of 25 was head of a large military hospital in India, but Owen never knew him as he died of fever shortly after his marriage. The son, a posthumous child, was brought to England when quite young to be educated. Trained at Wellington College for one of the professions, he chose the Law, which he studied with two other young students who afterwards became famous—Lord Chancellor Swinfen-Eady and Lord Chancellor Cave. Even at that early age he had decided opinions of his own, and after making some acquaintance with the Law he came to the conclusion that he could not conscientiously practise a profession which upheld Authority and Privilege against the rights of the common people. His friends Swinfen-Eady and Cave tried hard to persuade him to alter his decision, but in vain.

When about 30 years of age he went to California, where he gained a living at various occupations, including teaching. He had been influenced greatly by Buckle's "History of Civilisation in England" and Herbert Spencer's writings, and accepted Socialist ideas as then generally understood, but was always more Individualist than Socialist. In the early nineties he translated Bebel's "Woman" from the German, and also translated "Paroles d'un Revolté" for various Labour papers in the States, much to the delight of Kropotkin, who made inquiries about the translator.

One of Owen's first public appearances as a speaker was in combating the agitation against Chinese immigration, which had roused bitter feeling in California. Henry George was also taking a prominent part in this agitation, and in this way Owen became acquainted with George's "Progress and Poverty," published some years previously. This book made a profound impression on him and, as our readers know, he realised the hopelessness of trying to solve the social question until monopoly of land was overthrown.

About 1890 Owen went East to New York, where he helped John Edelman and J. C. Kenworthy to start the Socialist League. He also met Merlino and Malatesta there.

In the spring of 1893 he paid a short visit to England and lectured at the old Autonomic Club in Tottenham Court Road in London. He wrote a resume of his lecture, "The New American Revolution," for *Freedom* (June, 1893). During this visit Owen met Kropotkin, and his conversations and subsequent correspondence with him led him to Anarchism. After his return to the States he continued to contribute articles to *Freedom* (September, 1893, and June and October, 1894). He also contributed to *Solidarity* in New York, edited by John Edelman. The first series of this paper (1892-93) was Socialist, but the second series published in the early part of 1895 was definitely Anarchist.

The industrial situation in California at that time was very bad, and numbers of workers were unemployed. Owen and some of his friends in San Francisco started organising them and were so successful that in a comparatively short time the Trade Unions gained control of the municipal government of that city. Their administration, however, was a great disappointment to him, for, as he told the writer, it was the most corrupt period in the municipal history of San Francisco. This lesson in politics he never forgot.

As a means of earning a livelihood he was at various times reporter, proof-reader, editor, and newspaper distributor. When gold was discovered in the Klondyke he tried his luck there for two winters, but gained nothing except experience. He found the monopolist was as busy there as in any other part of the world where the natural resources of the earth can be grabbed and fenced in.

On his return to California he took up newspaper work again. In his work as a police-court reporter he heard many tales of the brutal methods employed in U.S. prisons, and he undertook an investigation on behalf of the Prison Reform League. The evidence he collected was printed in a book, "Crime and Criminals," published in Los Angeles in 1910. It is a terrific indictment of U.S. prisons in general and Californian ones in particular.

The revolt of the Mexican peasants against Porfirio Diaz, the Dictator, however, gave him the best opportunity of exercising his brilliant talents as a writer and champion of the oppressed. The seizure and dividing up of the great landed estates by the peasants appealed strongly to Owen, and he threw himself heart and soul into the work of making their case known to the world. He joined the small but powerful group led by the brothers Ricardo and Enrique Magón, who played a big part in driving Diaz out of Mexico. As editor of the English section of *Regeneración*, the organ of the Mexican Liberal Party, published in Los Angeles, he wrote some of his finest articles. Week after week he drove home the lesson that the expropriation of the land monopolists was the only revolution that mattered, and he appealed to the workers of the United States to support the Mexican peasants morally and financially. The U.S. authorities tried to stop this agitation on



American soil, and some extra strong article by the brothers Magón brought about their arrest and imprisonment. Owen and others carried on the paper while they were in prison. On their release they showed that persecution had only made them more determined. But another fiery article brought about their arrest again and they were thrown into prison, from which Ricardo was only released by death. A warrant was issued for the arrest of Owen, but a friendly warning gave him an opportunity to escape the clutches of the police. For six months he was in hiding and then he got to New York, from whence he came to England in 1916. In 1914 he found time to start a paper of his own, *Land and Liberty*, but owing to lack of support it ceased publication the following year.

On his arrival in England he got in touch with an old friend and correspondent, Mr. John Bagot, proprietor of the *Middleton Guardian*, an enthusiastic follower of Henry George, with the result that he contributed a weekly leading article and notes to the *Guardian*, which he continued up to the date of his illness. This work he did without payment until the death of Mr. Bagot.

When the present writer discovered that Owen was in England he wrote to him saying how much he valued the work he did on *Regeneration*, and asked him to write for *Freedom*. Owen replied saying that he was an Individualist and he did not think his writings would please the readers of an Anarchist Communist paper; but on being told we were Anarchists first and foremost, he consented. Thus began a friendship which the writer will ever treasure. For two years we lived together and many were the long talks we had at midnight, and sometimes long after, over innumerable cups of tea and cigarettes. To know him was a liberal education. His knowledge of books and men was tremendous and his memory wonderful. As a writer for *Freedom* and the *Bulletin* he was always willing, and there was never anything slipshod about his work. His knowledge of languages was a great help to an editor who knew hardly any, and he translated many letters and articles received from foreign correspondents.

Owen's heart was always in the land question. Land monopoly he considered the root of all our

economic evils, and the helplessness of the workers, especially of the unemployed, was the direct result of their having been dispossessed of the land, the treasure house of Nature. To help on the agitation against land monopoly he joined the Commonwealth Land Party, and wrote regularly for their organ, the *Commonweal*. A fine series of articles which he wrote in that journal is published in a pamphlet entitled "Set My People Free!"

Many years ago he wrote a book on "The Economics of Herbert Spencer," but his Anarchist writings have only been newspaper articles and pamphlets. Of the latter, "Anarchism v. Socialism" is probably the best from his pen.

In the passing of William Charles Owen the Anarchist movement loses its best English propagandist. As one who fought for individual liberty, he was a fierce and scornful opponent of State Socialism, and held in the greatest contempt the Labour and Socialist politicians who promised the workers freedom from wage-slavery, which he considered could never be achieved by or through the State.

A charming and lovable comrade and friend, he will be greatly missed by all who knew him personally or only through his writings.

Owen was laid in his last resting-place at Washington, in Sussex, near to the South Downs, and a mile or so from "The Sanctuary," Storrington, where he lived during the last two or three years. His friend, Mr. William Drury, presided at the graveside. Many comrades and friends were present, including Mr. Frost, Peter Goodman, Lettice Newman, Eric Richmond, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Earle, Mrs. Drury, Doris Zhook, J. W. Graham Peace (Editor of the *Commonweal*), M. Warriner, Miss Vernon-Jones, John Turner, Miss Taylor, J. J. Batson, Mr. White, Mrs. Askew, Dr. Shewcyn, Victor and Kathleen Neuburg, and T. H. Keell. Many floral tributes were received from comrades and friends, among them being some from "The Sanctuary," the Commonwealth Land Party, and the London Freedom Group.

Speeches in honour of Owen were made by Mr. Drury, J. W. Graham Peace, T. H. Keell, John Turner, and Victor Neuburg, all of whom bore testimony to his work for humanity.

T. H. KEELL.

## WILLIAM CHARLES OWEN.

Happily for our race there are born in every generation a few "sports," whose love of principle is greater than their love of themselves; whose passion for liberty goes deeper than their passion for gain. Such beings are rare, and subject to the hatred and obloquy of their fellows; notwithstanding this, they continue to toil for the race, to dream for the future. Had it not been—and were it not now—for these exceptional men and women, we should still be climbing trees and swinging by our tails. The world, composed naturally of ordinary and average people, cannot tolerate gladly the uncomfortable thinker, the insistent, incorruptible social theorist; so he dies poor, unfamous, almost alone.

Such an one was William Charles Owen, whose passing is an almost irreparable loss to the cause of

Liberty throughout the world. He was one of the uncommon men who look beyond the close walls of their class-boundaries into the greater human world beyond; who cast away tradition, wealth, prospects, position, to be of service to the under-dogs and the enslaved.

So our friend left all the comfortable, easy things of the world to try to show a happier, cleaner path to humanity; and he hated the institutions—Churches and States—that insist on the necessity for the enslavement of mankind. Owen gladly abandoned everything in his attempt to lead humanity some way along the road that ends—such was his faith—in complete mental, social and economic liberty. Leaving the question of "expediency," he it noted here that one of our number, by birth an

aristocrat, by education a "gentleman," by tastes a connoisseur, left behind him, joyously and completely, everything for which the ordinary, dull grab-man fights, and which he spends his life to obtain. All the delights of the Sybarite Owen sacrificed, fully and gladly, upon the altar of Freedom. Than this no nobler sacrifice is possible. The fabled "saviours," the fictitious gods, died for humanity; Owen lived for humanity. The difference between superstition and truth is the exact difference between the quack politicians of our day and our late friend Owen. In the most financially-unpromising causes, in the most socially-hopeless ideals, he never quailed or failed. An indomitable fighter, he would not swerve from the narrow path that leads to conquest, and his example is one that will be followed increasingly by the young and honest in an age that is beginning to perceive the quackery and folly of all the recognised political nostrums; the barren formulæ of politicians, those dreary social quacks, charlatans and cheap-jacks.

Owen got down to first principles, the roots of the matter. He held that by freeing the land, by abolishing class-distinctions, by making individual liberty the human ideal, things would get done. So he had no use for politicians, placemen, journalists, and time-servers who adapted themselves and their views to the exigencies of the moment. Such fellows were to him humbugs—that, and nothing more—and, naturally, being clean-minded and sound-hearted, he objected to these parasites on the social body.

In all moods I have known and loved Owen, and in all moods his boundless optimism, his real, living joy in the young, shone through him. Disloyalty in any form was to him unthinkable; he could not understand it. And in terms of human happiness, despite poverty and misunderstandings, he was certainly richer than those of his friends who distinguished themselves in social, commercial and professional life.

It is scarcely needful to say here that to religion our old friend was Agnostic, and to politics Anarchist. In his time he was poet, orator, actor, actor-manager, dramatist, editor, and many other things. In almost any of these vocations he could, had he so chosen, have been materially successful. But, like many another choice spirit, he had no use for that material success that so often means spiritual damnation. In every one of his many vocations he was a complete, uncompromising, unshakeable Libertarian.

A loyal friend, a courteous opponent, a dignified thinker, a charming personality, a scholar and a linguist, the brave old warrior died free, happy and poor. Almost to the last his pen was active in the service of man, whom he loved. If there be a continuation of life after the passing, he will continue to work for man, and Owen would ask nothing more of the universe.

It is rare to find so generous and lovable a personality as Owen's combined with so revolutionary and uncompromising a mind. He was the most affectionate of revolutionaries, the kindest of Anarchists. He loved life to the brim, and smoked, sang, drank and yarned like the proud, seasoned old Bohemian that he was. Loathing Puritanism in all its disguises, he was a herald of the day when every man will lead a full, free, untrammelled life. He never failed me as man, friend, helper, or colleague, and he was a perfect host and guest. And he adored children and animals, who returned his love.

Salutations to the pioneers, the unrecognised princes, of our race. Honour to William Charles Owen. In the words of a forgotten poet:—

Honour to him who, self-complete and brave  
In scorn, can carve his pathway to the grave,  
And heeding naught of what men think or say,  
Make his own heart his world upon the way!

VICTOR B. NECHURG.

## CUTTINGS AND COMMENTS.

### THE "MODERATE PARLIAMENT."

The Parliament that has just finished its first session might be named the "Moderate Parliament." Moderation was in every line of the King's Speech; in every word uttered by H.M. Ministers; in each of the Government's Bills. A tedious month of Parliamentary compromise and blunder. Not until the House was about to rise did things wake up, and then the outburst was, when all is said and done, much ado about nothing. A drastic change in foreign policy could hardly please the Opposition; but why the melodrama about Lord Lloyd's dismissal, occasioned mainly by the way the Government handled it? MacDonald's assurance that no change in Egyptian affairs would be effected without the agreement of the Dominions is another illustration of the Empire tail wagging the British Lion's body. "Safety First" is as much Labour policy as Tory.

### "BLOW, BLOW, THOU WINTER WIND."

The only gratifying feature about this Parliament is the revolt of the back-benchers. Discontent with

the Labour leaders is intensifying, and the Left-wingers are organising themselves to make their opposition stronger. Thomas's snub to W. J. Brown, Labour Member for Wolverhampton, that a few weeks' or years' experience would enable him to know better than ask discomfiting questions, has not helped towards unity, and neither has his vulgar sneer at Parliamentary Secretaries. The vague plans for relieving unemployment put forward by Thomas occasioned open hostility from more than one quarter on the Government side, and the support given by Labour Members to the Liberals' censure on the Government for failing to fulfil their election pledge as regards the Scottish Act shows the way the wind is blowing. May it blow hard and strong.

### WESTMINSTER v. WHITEHALL.

"I tell you perfectly frankly that I can do three times more work when the House of Commons is not sitting than I can do when it is. The House of Commons itself is a problem, and never a bigger one than to-day, because you did not give us a majority.



But when the House of Commons has ceased to meet, then we have got a free field for work, and I want that free field."—MacDonald at Durham, July 6th.

Perhaps, after all, Parliament can do some good in hindering the work of Government Departments and staying the progress of bureaucracy. Here is good work for the back-benchers to perform.

#### THE EIGHT-HOURS ACT.

The Government's attitude towards the Eight-Hours Act was summarised by W. Graham, President of the Board of Trade, in the House on July 23rd:—

"In the legislation to be introduced in the autumn the Government would take powers to enable them, if necessary, to compel colliery owners to conform to the rules of a district organisation inaugurated with the approval of owners of collieries producing the majority of the output of the district," he said. "The Government would also take powers to enable them to initiate a scheme in any district which failed to constitute an organisation having the approval of the majority, and would take similar powers to set up a central co-ordinating authority if one was not constituted voluntarily. *The owners had also been invited to remain in constant consultation with the Government as to the terms of the legislation.*"

#### BALDWIN SPEAKS THE TRUTH.

"Terrible events have sometimes followed hasty

conclusions, but if bloodshed comes, the politician always escapes. The worst that can happen is loss of office; the men who give their blood have nothing to do with laying the train that led to the explosion." —Baldwin in the House of Commons, July 26th.

#### THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM.

The Government's refusal to allow Trotsky in England is an example of sheer cowardice. But the most significant and deplorable part of the whole business was Clynes's explanation of the "right of asylum."

"In regard to what is called 'the right of asylum,' this country has the right to grant asylum to any person whom it thinks fit to admit as a political refugee," he told the House of Commons on July 18th.

Which ignores any right of the individual and sees only the right of the State.

In 1858, Lord Chief Justice Campbell defined the "right of asylum," which he described as "a glory which I hope will ever belong to this country," as meaning "that foreigners are at liberty to come to this country and to leave it at their own will and pleasure, and they cannot be disturbed by the Government of this country so long as they obey our laws."

To their credit, let it be said, protest against the exclusion of Trotsky was loudest among the Liberals.

B. B. W.

### BERKMAN'S ABC OF COMMUNIST ANARCHISM\*

It seems ages since a book on Anarchism was written in the English language, and if for no other reason we welcome Berkman's ABC on that account.

In his Foreword the author says that most of the larger works on Anarchism were written before the World War, but the experience of the recent past, especially the Russian Revolution, has been vital and has made certain revisions necessary in the Anarchist attitude and argumentation. Besides most books dealing with social problems are written on the assumption that the reader is familiar with the subject, which is generally not the case. For these reasons he considers a restatement of the Anarchist position very much needed at this time—a restatement in the plainest and clearest terms which can be understood by everyone. And in stating his case Berkman's simplicity of language and clarity leave nothing to be desired. If the "man in the street" cannot understand the arguments in this book he will never understand anything.

In his first chapter, "What do you want out of life?" Berkman shows that we are all striving for the same end, well-being, happiness, and economic security, but whilst this is attainable by a comparatively few people, to the great majority it is an impossibility. He thereupon proceeds to analyse our present system of society with its division into classes and the inevitable antagonism between them—the class war. On the one hand, a small but powerful and privileged capitalist class, owning most of the wealth of the country, by means of which they control the Government, the law courts, the army, navy, and police; the churches, the schools, and the press. On the other hand, the great mass of working men and women dependent for their living on serving the

interests of the capitalist class, competing with each other for jobs, and compelled to accept low wages, long hours of work, and poor housing accommodation. In every attempt to improve their condition by strikes they are opposed by the whole weight of the law; and should they get arrested they find that the boasted justice of the courts is a myth. He instances the legal murder of the Chicago Martyrs in 1887, the Mooney and Billings trial in 1916, and the Sacco and Vanzetti case, still fresh in our memory. In each case the men tried and sentenced had been active in the Labour movement, trying to force better conditions for the workers from a reluctant and hostile capitalist class. In each case money was spent lavishly in obtaining perjured testimony to get a conviction, and the victims of the law were sentenced in spite of overwhelming evidence of their innocence of the crimes with which they were charged. Courts of law were not instituted to give justice to the workers, but to punish ruthlessly all those who dared to challenge the capitalist system. This system, however, could not last if it were not supported by the great majority of the people. Government has no strength in itself, but only in the support it receives. Withdraw that support and it is helpless. But the people believe that Government and Capitalism are necessary and in the long run beneficial. If, however, their eyes could be opened to the truth that their misery and economic insecurity are directly due to the present system, then undoubtedly they would wish to abolish it and put another in its place. But how can they abolish institutions which seem built on solid rock? And supposing they could, what would they put in their place? These questions Berkman sets himself to answer.

In the first place, they must decide what they really want. If it is liberty and an opportunity to produce the means of life freely in co-operation and on an equality with their fellows, then they must avoid putting a new Government or a new ruling class in the place of the old one. Liberty is possible only without Government—that is, Anarchy. And co-operation on an equality with your fellows, says Berkman, is possible only in Communism. Thus, Communist Anarchism is the only method which can meet the workers' desire for liberty and equality.

Having decided that Communist Anarchism is their aim, how are the workers and those who sympathise with them to bring it about? Only by a social revolution, says Berkman. "There is no record of any government or authority, of any group or class in power having given up its mastery voluntarily. In every instance it required the use of force, or at least the threat of it. Is it reasonable to assume that authority and wealth will experience a sudden change of heart, and that they will behave differently in the future than they had in the past? . . . They will fight to the death for their existence." But "only that revolution can be fundamental, social, and successful which will be the expression of a basic change of ideas and opinions." Therefore, the social revolution must be prepared. The Russian revolution is an instance of failure due to lack of preparation and definite purpose. The peasants seized the land and the workers took over the factories. Up to this point the revolution was a success. But lacking experience and definite purpose, a political party stepped in and took affairs out of the hands of the masses. "Politics replaced economic reconstruction and thereby sounded the death knell of the social revolution; for people live by bread, by economics, not by politics."

As the workers have most to gain from the social revolution, they must lead the way in preparing for it through their Unions, which must be reorganised in accordance with the aim of liberty and equality. By means of shop and factory committees and industrial councils, knowledge will be gained of the working of the industrial machine. The sympathy and co-operation of the agricultural workers must be gained, and joint councils held to form a close bond with the farmers and farm workers. Another element absolutely essential in the constructive work is the trained mind of the professional man—the industrial organiser, the electrical and mechanical engineer, the technical specialist, the scientist, inventor, chemist, the educator, doctor and surgeon—the intellectual proletariat, the proletariat of brain. All must work together to prepare for the social revolution. Knowledge of production, distribution, and communication must be gained for the same purpose.

The revolution cannot be fought with rifles and barricades—that would be ridiculous in face of the weapons controlled to-day by the State—but by means of the General Strike. "The strength of labour is not on the field of battle. It is in the shop, in the mine and factory. There lies its power that no army in the world can defeat, no human agency conquer. . . . The General Strike, rightly understood and thoroughly carried out, is the social revolution." Then with the success of the revolution, and with all the means of production and

distribution in their hands, the economic life of the community can be resumed, all co-operating and sharing on an equality.

We have summarised Berkman's book to the best of our ability, but its 300 pages must be read to get an insight into its full meaning. His language is simple yet eloquent, and he puts his case with the true fervour of a revolutionary propagandist. Much time and thought must have been spent on the writing of this book, for which Berkman has earned the thanks of the Anarchist movement. To-day when the Labour movement is looking so pathetically to the State as the new saviour, it is refreshing to find the Anarchist principle of self-reliance and individual liberty expounded so vigorously and clearly.

"Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism." By Alexander Berkman. \$1.50. New York: The Vanguard Press and the Jewish Anarchist Federation. (Obtainable from Freedom Press, 62, 64, post free.)

### APPEAL TO OUR READERS.

We are in urgent need of your financial support. Unless it is forthcoming FREEDOM BULLETIN may have to stop, though we shall do our utmost to keep going. This is the first number since the May issue. We have enlarged it to eight pages as a memorial number to our comrade, William C. Owen. Some of the extra cost has been met by donations to the amount of £3 from two comrades who think the publication of FREEDOM BULLETIN the best memorial to our beloved comrade Owen.

Donations and subscriptions for FREEDOM BULLETIN have fallen off very sadly since our last issue; some of those who have received packets of each issue have also failed to pay us anything. In these circumstances we have been reluctantly compelled to cut off their supply and also to stop sending to subscribers who have not paid a subscription for some time. Other subscribers and agents are in arrears, and we hope this intimation will induce them to send us money at once. We can only send to those who are sufficiently interested to pay for the paper.

Owing to the almost complete cessation of propaganda meetings, we have been advertising some of our literature in the *New Leader*, *Forward*, and other papers. In this way we have got in touch with new readers, who otherwise would never have heard of Anarchism. Advertisements, however, cost money; but we wish to continue them as our sole means of getting our literature known, so we ask for your assistance also for this purpose.

All subscriptions and donations should be sent to Freedom Press, Whiteway Colony, Stroud, Glos.

The following donations to our Guarantee Fund have been received to date (August 20) since our last issue:—H.F.B. 10s., W. A. Bond 1s., C. Blandy 2s., A.J.R. £1, "Vigilant" 1s. 6d., R. Gundersen 4s., J. Rosende 4s. 2d., A. E. Lavers 2s. 6d., J.S.R. 2s., B. Black £1, T. K. Wolfe 2s., W. D. £1, L. G. Wolfe £2, T.H.K. £1, W. H. Sikes, £1 10s.

### "THE ROAD TO FREEDOM."

The August issue of *Road to Freedom* (New York) is a special Sacco-Vanzetti number. It contains much fresh material, including a letter from Vanzetti on "The Part the Communists Played." Also articles by well-known comrades. Enlarged to 12 pages, this number should be read by all. We have a stock on hand. Price per copy, 3½d. post free; 12 copies for 3/-.